

SB165 --- licensing board principles(*Sen. Joe Balyeat*)

This bill simply reiterates in statute what we'd all like to believe in our hearts. 1) that there is no favoritism played out in professional licensing. 2) that the purpose of licensing boards is to protect public health and safety, not to restrict competition; or make it harder for young people to enter a given profession.... What I call the practice of "slamming the gate behind you". You made your way into a specialized field granted privileges to practice via a government license, and now you want to make it difficult or impossible for other new people to enter the field and compete with you.

Simple bill. <read it>. Last session only 2 minor objections in Sen B&L, we amended the language to their satisfaction, and the bill passed the Senate 50 - 0, I believe.

Got over to house B&L and I was bushwhacked by a mob of opponents. None of them came to me ahead of time and told me they had a problem with the bill. It was one of the few times I've come close to losing my cool in the legislature. My response was this: These people object to the bills language saying they can't use licensing to restrain trade or competition, Why?... Because they want to restrain trade and competition.... And I submit once again, that if that is the purpose of boards, then this committee ought to abolish every single board under our pervuew.

There is a problem. I don't have to tell you folks that, you've already seen it this early in the session. There have been many problems during my tenure here. One of the biggest was the appraisers' board, which set up a licensing system so convoluted that it basically enslaved new would-be appraisers to the whim of sitting appraisers indefinitely... with no promise even at the end of that servitude that they'd even get one foot in the door without having it slammed on them. Sen. Kim Hansen, the democrat from up near Havre carried that bill, with my full support.

I recruited no proponents. I'll sit and listen to opponents, if any, and then close by telling you why they're all wrong.